

April 25, 2013

Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related
Agencies
Senate Dirksen Building, 142
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science and Related
Agencies
Senate Hart Building, 125
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Vice Chairman Shelby:

As you begin consideration of a Fiscal Year 2014 appropriation bill for the agencies within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, I respectfully request support for the programs listed below. The funding requested for the national programs is to be spent at the agencies' discretion within the existing budget line and is not intended for any specific business, state, community or other entity.

Department of Commerce – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA)

1. Title: Coastal Science, Assessment, Response and Restoration (*formerly Marine Debris*)

Account: National Ocean Service; Operations, Research and Facilities; Coastal Science and Assessment

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$4.6 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$6 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$15 million

Report Language Requested: *2011 Tsunami Debris Clean-up West Coast* - The Committee commends the \$5 million contribution by the Japanese Government to the clean-up effort for debris impacting the West Coast of the United States as a result of the 2011 tsunami. The Committee is concerned the current budget request does not adequately fund this effort, which NOAA has estimated may be in the billions of dollars. Debris from the 2011 tsunami continues to negatively impact the West Coast and local community environments, ecosystems and subsistence practices and activities. Therefore, the Committee recommends an additional \$15 million for clean-up of debris on the West Coast from the 2011 tsunami.

Rationale: An additional \$15 million would provide a three-to-one match to the \$5 million the Japanese government provided for 2011 tsunami marine debris clean-up.

Funds would be used to for local clean-up efforts in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California and Hawaii.

2. Title: John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program
Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities;
Protected Species Research and Management
Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$4 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$4 million

Rationale: An additional \$4 million would restore the John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant program which is critical to maintaining veterinary and animal-care infrastructure the nation relies on for oil-spill response. The Prescott Grant Program provides grants to stranding network organizations to rescue, rehabilitate, or investigate sick, injured or distressed live marine mammals and to determine the cause of death or disease in dead marine mammals.

3. Title: Salmon Management Activities

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities;
Protected Species Research and Management

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$33.623 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$27 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$6 million

Rationale: Programs including Expanded Stock Assessments, support for Regional Fishery Management Councils, increased funding for Observers, Bering Sea and Aleutian Island in-season groundfish management, Cooperative Research and Climate Regimes and Ecosystem Productivity are all critical to ensuring our nation's fisheries are well understood and managed, leading to sustainable economic prosperity for coastal communities. West Coast and Alaska king salmon runs continue an unexplained decline, resulting in federal fishery disasters being declared in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Elsewhere along the West Coast, salmon continue to be listed as endangered species. An additional \$6 million would return Salmon Management Activities to Fiscal Year 2012 levels to ensure obligations in this program are met.

4. Title: Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$65 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$50 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$15 million

Bill Language Requested: Modification to existing language that recognizes opportunities to use the fund for projects in support of conservation of salmon populations that are not listed under the *Endangered Species Act*. The change will not

interfere with any programs currently conducted by the states and tribes that benefit from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. After “steelhead populations,” insert “for restoration of populations.”

Rationale: The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund was established by Congress in Fiscal Year 2000 to protect, restore, and conserve Pacific salmonids and their habitats. The request is the same as the Fiscal Year 2012 level to ensure adequate funding of the program. Funds are for conservation and restoration of Pacific salmon populations. State and local recipients of this funding will provide matching contributions of at least 33 percent of Federal funds. In addition, funds will be available to tribes, which do not require matching dollars.

5. Title: Fisheries Finance Program (FFP)

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: See below for amounts

President’s Legislative Request for Fiscal Year 2014: “Subject to section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, during Fiscal Year 2014, obligations of direct loans may not exceed \$24,000,000 for Individual Fishing Quota loans and not to exceed \$59,000,000 for traditional direct loans as authorized by the Merchant Marine Act of 1936: Provided, That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used for direct loans for any new fishing vessel that will increase the harvesting capacity in any United States fishery.”

Proposed Legislation: “Subject to section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, during Fiscal Year 2014, obligations of direct loans may not exceed \$24,000,000 for Individual Fishing Quota loans and not to exceed \$100,000,000 for traditional direct loans as authorized by the Merchant Marine Act of 1936.”

Rationale: The language will increase the loan authority for the traditional direct loan program. The loans would be used by vessel owners seeking to replace, rebuild and refinance fishing vessels participating in the North Pacific fisheries. The FFP prohibits loans for new vessel construction or reconstruction that increases harvesting capacity. This policy is outdated and inapplicable to most federal fisheries in the North Pacific, which are managed under catch share programs, and where fisheries are not over capitalized and overfishing does not occur. At present, the FFP loan program authority is not large enough to finance the construction of new vessels that will cost from \$10 million to \$100 million. The FFP direct loan account needs to be increased to meet the demands of modernizing the North Pacific fishing fleet, making the vessels safer, more efficient, more globally competitive and economic. While the North Pacific fleet may have the most acute and immediate need to replace and rebuild vessels, the entire American fishing fleet is aging and will need to be replaced in the coming decades. Increasing the FFP loan authority will provide loans to vessel owners to build and refinance new vessels and make major modifications to existing vessels. These loans will

help the fleet modernize and provide significant economic benefits to shipyards and support industries.

6. Title: Navigation, Observations & Positioning (*formerly Mapping & Charting Base*)

Account: National Ocean Service; Operations, Research and Facilities; Navigation, Observations and Positioning

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$50.584 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$52.112 million

Report Language Requested: The Committee encourages the National Ocean Service to prioritize Arctic states for mapping and charting as the region increases in importance.

Rationale: Many states have an extensive backlog of critical areas that have never been adequately surveyed, including much of the Arctic. The increased funding for nautical charting will help address this backlog and enable expanded economic activity and increase marine environmental protection.

7. Title: Hydrographic Survey Priorities & Contracts (*formerly Address Survey Backlog/Contracts*)

Account: National Ocean Service; Operations, Research and Facilities; Navigation, Observations and Positioning

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$27 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$29.946 million

Rationale: The additional funding will reduce the current backlog of hydrographic surveys within navigationally significant areas.

8. Title: Teacher-at-Sea

Account: National Marine Fisheries Service; Operations, Research and Facilities; Fisheries Research and Management Programs (\$450,000); & NOAA-Wide Office of Marine and Aviation Operations; Marine Operations and Maintenance (\$150,000)

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$600,000

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$600,000

Rationale: The President's Budget proposes to consolidate all science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs in the Department of Education, National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian. The Teacher-at-Sea program will not be replicated. The Teacher-at-Sea program provides important connections between NOAA's research and K-12 classrooms. Up to 30 teachers per year participate in the Teacher-at-Sea program. Teachers at the kindergarten through college level spend time on NOAA vessels working with NOAA scientists. The teachers provide a valuable connection between NOAA and their students. The popularity of the program led two alumni to develop the spin-off, Teacher in the Air. NOAA's Teacher in the Air program

now flies between two to five teachers on NOAA aircraft each year. As of Fiscal Year 2012, over 630 teachers, from all 50 states, have participated in the programs.

9. Title: Sea Grant John A. Knauss Fellowship Program

Account: Office of Oceanic Atmospheric Research; Operations, Research and Facilities; Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Research; National Sea Grant College Program; STEM Education

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$4 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$0

Additional Amount Requested: +\$4 million

Rationale: The President's Budget proposes to consolidate all STEM programs in the Department of Education, National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian. The Knauss Fellowship Program will not be replicated. The Knauss fellowship ensures policy-makers across the government are advised by trained scientists.

10. Title: Integrated Ocean Acidification

Account: Office of Oceanic Atmospheric Research; Operations, Research and Facilities; Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Research

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$6.4 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$8.4 million

Rationale: Ocean acidification threatens West Coast and Alaskan coastal communities, which economically rely on salmon and crab fishing and oyster mariculture, all of which are threatened by ocean acidification. Increased monitoring and research on the impacts of acidification, particularly on finfish larvae, are needed.

11. Title: Local Warnings and Forecast Base

Account: National Weather Service; Operations Research and Facilities; Operations and Research; Local Warnings and Forecasts Base

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$655 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$658.2 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$9.78 million

Rationale: The increase would prevent the elimination of 98 Information Technology Officers (ITOs) at Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) around the country. ITOs are needed on-scene during severe weather events to ensure the WFOs ability to provide critical warnings and notifications, especially as AWIPS II is rolled out. Many forecast offices do not have sufficient internet bandwidth to accommodate remote IT support.

I also request the subcommittee fully fund weather satellite programs critical for protecting American lives.

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Department of Justice

12. Title: Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Program

Account: State, Local and Tribal Law Enforcement Assistance; Office of Justice Programs; Justice Assistance/Research, Evaluation and Statistics

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$27 million

President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$25 million

Additional Amount Requested: +\$20 million

Rationale: In Fiscal Year 2012, funding for RISS was reduced from \$45 million to \$27 million. Reduced funding levels will prevent RISS from providing important services to the country. WSIN/RISS also offers the RISSafe program which provides important officer safety training.

13. Title: Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

Account: State, Local and Tribal Law Enforcement Assistance

Fiscal Year 2013 Enacted: \$199 million

Support President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2014: \$439.5 million

Rationale: The President's Budget request includes important funding for state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire officers and for the development of school safety programs. This funding will address community needs in Alaska by providing funding opportunities to prevent crime and address disorderly behavior. The President's Budget request includes \$150 million in funding for the COPS Comprehensive School Safety Program, which provides grants and technical assistance for the development of school safety programs. Such funding can be used to hire school safety personnel, including officers, counselors and social workers. This funding may also support training for personnel in order to prevent overly harsh discipline for youth misbehavior.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Lindsay Kavanaugh, at (202) 224-1924 if additional information is required.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator